

## Message Text

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ORIGIN SS-25

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SSO-00 NSCE-00 /026 R

DRAFTED BY NEA:ARLAY:MAR

APPROVED BY THE SECRETARY

NEA:ALATHERTONJR.

P:PHABIB

S/S:O-AWOTTO

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FM SECSTATE WASHDC

TO AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS NIACT IMMEDIATE

INFO AMEMBASSY BEIRUT IMMEDIATE

S E C R E T STATE 174984

EXDIS - FOR AMBASSADOR FROM SECRETARY

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, LE, SY, US

SUBJECT: EVACUATION FROM LEBANON

1. WE ARE PLANNING TO REDUCE THE EMBASSY BEIRUT STAFF TO A BARE MINIMUM AND TO URGE ALL REMAINING AMERICANS TO LEAVE LEBANON AT THIS TIME. AS WITH THE DEPARTURE OPERATION A MONTH AGO, WE WANT TO REQUEST SYRIAN COUNSEL AND ASSISTANCE. YOU SHOULD THEREFORE TALK WITH SHIHABI, DAOUDI OR KHADDAM URGENTLY ALONG THE FOLLOWING LINES.

2. CONDITIONS IN BEIRUT HAVE DETERIORATED TO THE POINT WHERE OUR EMBASSY IS EXTREMELY LIMITED IN ITS OPERATIONS AND WHERE ITS PERSONNEL ARE EXPOSED TO INCREASING RISKS. WE HAVE THEREFORE DECIDED TO REDUCE THE SIZE OF THE STAFF SHARPLY, LEAVING ONLY A BARE MINIMUM. AT THE SAME TIME, WE WILL BE STRONGLY URGING THE REMAINING AMERICANS IN THE CITY TO DEPART. WE ARE PLANNING TO ARRANGE TRANSPORTATION OUT OF THE COUNTRY FOR BOTH OFFICIAL AND UNOFFICIAL

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AMERICANS, AND ANY THIRD COUNTRY NATIONALS WHO MAY WISH TO

JOIN US, ON TUESDAY, JULY 20. WE DO NOT KNOW HOW MANY PEOPLE WILL BE INVOLVED, BUT THERE COULD BE SEVERAL HUNDRED. AS IN THE CASE OF OUR DEPARTURE IN JUNE, WE WOULD MUCH APPRECIATE SYRIAN ADVICE AND ASSISTANCE.

3. WE ARE EXPLORING FOUR ALTERNATIVE METHODS OF TRAVEL. WE HOPE TO AVOID USE OF NAVAL VESSELS, AND ARE AT THIS TIME CONSIDERING ONLY CIVILIAN MEANS OF TRANSPORT.

-- CHARTERED AIRCRAFT FROM BEIRUT AIRPORT;

-- ROAD CONVOY TO SYRIA;

-- SEA DEPARTURE ON CIVILIAN TRANSPORT VESSEL FROM BEIRUT;

-- SEA DEPARTURE ON CIVILIAN TRANSPORT VESSEL FROM SIDON (WHERE THERE ARE DOCKING FACILITIES NOT AVAILABLE IN BEIRUT).

4. MOVEMENT BY AIR WILL REQUIRE AGREEMENT OF THE ELEMENTS CONTROLLING THE AIRPORT. IT HAS OCCURRED TO US THAT THE ARAB LEAGUE FORCE MIGHT BE OF SOME ASSISTANCE IN THIS RESPECT AND WE ARE ALSO CONSULTING THE SAUDIS ON THAT. A MAJOR PROBLEM IN USING THE AIRPORT, HOWEVER, IS THE POSSIBILITY THAT THE MARONITES MIGHT INTERFERE WITH THE OPERATION BY SHELLING THE AIRPORT IF THEY ARE NOT PREPARED FOR WHAT WE ARE DOING. GIVEN THE DIFFICULTIES OF COMMUNICATING FROM ONE PART OF BEIRUT TO ANOTHER, WE NOW HAVE LITTLE CONTACT WITH THE MARONITES. WE WOULD BE GRATEFUL IF THE SYRIANS COULD RAISE THIS POSSIBILITY WITH THEM URGENTLY AND SEEK ASSURANCES THAT, SHOULD WE DECIDE ON THE AIR ROUTE, THERE WOULD BE NO INTERFERENCE FROM THAT QUARTER. WE FEEL WE WOULD HAVE TO HAVE CLEAR-CUT ASSURANCES ON THIS POINT BEFORE WE COULD USE THIS ROUTE.

5. THE OVERLAND CONVOY PROCEDURE IS BY NOW FAMILIAR. WE WOULD NEED FROM THE SYRIANS THE EXCELLENT COOPERATION THAT THEY HAVE BEEN GIVING TO THESE CONVOYS. WE WOULD ALSO LIKE TO KNOW WHETHER THEY WOULD AGREE TO SEND A GASOLINE TRUCK TO THE VICINITY OF MARJAOUN, SINCE, AS THE

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SYRIANS KNOW, GASOLINE IS IN VERY SHORT SUPPLY IN BEIRUT AND OUR VEHICLES MIGHT NOT MAKE IT THROUGH TO SYRIA WITHOUT REFUELING.

6. WE WOULD HAVE LITTLE TO ASK OF THE SYRIANS IN CONNECTION WITH THE SEA ROUTE FROM BEIRUT, ALTHOUGH IT WOULD ALSO BE ESSENTIAL TO BE CERTAIN THAT THE CHRISTIANS UNDERSTOOD WHAT WE WERE DOING SO THAT THEY COULD AVOID ANY

ACTIONS THAT MIGHT JEOPARDIZE THE SECURITY OF THE AREA WHILE WE WERE EMBARKING OUR PASSENGERS. IN THE EVENT OF A SEA DEPARTURE FROM SIDON, HOWEVER, SYRIAN COOPERATION WOULD BE MOST IMPORTANT TO US.

7. WE WOULD LIKE TO HAVE URGENTLY ANY COMMENTS THE

SYRIANS MIGHT HAVE ON THESE ROUTES AND THE POINTS WE HAVE MADE, AS WELL AS ANY THOUGHTS ABOUT ALTERNATIVE POSSIBILITIES AND PARTICULARLY HOW THEY MIGHT BE DIRECTLY HELPFUL IF WE CHOSE TO USE THE AIRPORT. OUR DESIRE IS TO PROCEED IN A LOW-KEY WAY WITH A MAXIMUM OF SECURITY AND A MINIMUM OF EXPOSURE. WE ANTICIPATE ANNOUNCING OUR INTENTION TO ARRANGE DEPARTURE TOWARD THE END OF THE WEEK, THOUGH WE WILL PRESUMABLY NOT MAKE PUBLIC THE MEANS OF TRAVEL UNTIL LATER. KISSINGER

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## Message Attributes

**Automatic Decaptioning:** Z  
**Capture Date:** 01 JAN 1994  
**Channel Indicators:** n/a  
**Current Classification:** UNCLASSIFIED  
**Concepts:** EMERGENCY EVACUATION, EVACUATION PLANS  
**Control Number:** n/a  
**Copy:** SINGLE  
**Draft Date:** 15 JUL 1976  
**Decaption Date:** 28 MAY 2004  
**Decaption Note:** 25 YEAR REVIEW  
**Disposition Action:** RELEASED  
**Disposition Approved on Date:**  
**Disposition Authority:** greeneet  
**Disposition Case Number:** n/a  
**Disposition Comment:** 25 YEAR REVIEW  
**Disposition Date:** 28 MAY 2004  
**Disposition Event:**  
**Disposition History:** n/a  
**Disposition Reason:**  
**Disposition Remarks:**  
**Document Number:** 1976STATE174984  
**Document Source:** CORE  
**Document Unique ID:** 00  
**Drafter:** ARDAY:MAR  
**Enclosure:** n/a  
**Executive Order:** GS  
**Errors:** N/A  
**Film Number:** D760271-0731  
**From:** STATE  
**Handling Restrictions:** n/a  
**Image Path:**  
**ISecure:** 1  
**Legacy Key:** link1976/newtext/t19760754/aaaabvqr.tel  
**Line Count:** 131  
**Locator:** TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM  
**Office:** ORIGIN SS  
**Original Classification:** SECRET  
**Original Handling Restrictions:** EXDIS  
**Original Previous Classification:** n/a  
**Original Previous Handling Restrictions:** n/a  
**Page Count:** 3  
**Previous Channel Indicators:** n/a  
**Previous Classification:** SECRET  
**Previous Handling Restrictions:** EXDIS  
**Reference:** n/a  
**Review Action:** RELEASED, APPROVED  
**Review Authority:** greeneet  
**Review Comment:** n/a  
**Review Content Flags:**  
**Review Date:** 22 JUN 2004  
**Review Event:**  
**Review Exemptions:** n/a  
**Review History:** RELEASED <22 JUN 2004 by izenbei0>; APPROVED <18 OCT 2004 by greeneet>  
**Review Markings:**

Margaret P. Grafeld  
Declassified/Released  
US Department of State  
EO Systematic Review  
04 MAY 2006

**Review Media Identifier:**  
**Review Referrals:** n/a  
**Review Release Date:** n/a  
**Review Release Event:** n/a  
**Review Transfer Date:**  
**Review Withdrawn Fields:** n/a  
**Secure:** OPEN  
**Status:** NATIVE  
**Subject:** EVACUATION FROM LEBANON  
**TAGS:** PFOR, AEMR, LE, SY, US  
**To:** DAMASCUS  
**Type:** TE  
**Markings:** Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 04 MAY 2006